

NEW RECORDS OF *HYPOLIMNAS BOLINA NERINA* (FABRICIUS) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM THE PILBARA REGION, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

New observations of the varied eggfly *Hypolimnas bolina nerina* (Fabricius) from the Pilbara region of Western Australia are presented, comprising a brief observation of a male from the town of Tom Price and observation of fresh males from near the town of Pannawonica.

Introduction

In Australia, the varied eggfly, *Hypolimnas bolina nerina* (Fabricius), occurs from the north-west of Western Australia, east through the tropical regions of the Northern Territory and Queensland and south along the east coast as far as Ballina, New South Wales (Braby 2000). It has also been recorded sporadically as far south as Victoria, in the Australian Capital Territory and westwards into South Australia and the Northern Territory (Braby 2000).

There are only a handful of published records from the Pilbara region of Western Australia (Williams *et al.* 1993, Williams and Tomlinson 1994, Williams and Williams 2006, Ginn *et al.* 2007). Previous records south of the Kimberley region include Onslow (Common and Waterhouse 1981), Exmouth (Williams *et al.* 1993, Williams and Tomlinson 1994), Carnarvon (Williams *et al.* 1993), a worn female from Karratha (Williams and Williams 2006), Mount Augustus National Park (Williams *et al.* 1993), Laverton (Williams and Williams 2006) and Mount Robinson (Ginn *et al.* 2007).

New Pilbara records

At least three males of *H. b. nerina* were observed near an area of damp herbland on a floodplain west of Pannawonica (21°38'17"S, 116°19'23"E), on 5 April 2006. The area of herbland was bordered by tall shrubs and was in close proximity to a section of creek containing free water. Males were observed perching between 1.5-2 m off the ground on outer branches of tall shrubs of *Acacia citrinoviridis* Tindale & Maslin (Mimosaceae), as well as making flights over the herbland at a similar height. One of the males was photographed, allowing closer observation of wing condition. The specimen was in fresh condition, showing no signs of wear or damage to the wings. In the four months leading up to this observation there had been above average rainfall in the region (*ca* 3 x average in February and March 2006).

In addition, a single male *H. b. nerina* was observed near some gardens in the town of Tom Price (22°41'38"S, 117°47'16"E), on 6 September 2008.

Discussion

The male photographed was in good condition. This, along with the perching behaviour is consistent with that of males holding territories waiting for

emergent females (Kemp 2001, Kemp and Rutowski 2001, Braby 2004). However, it remains uncertain whether these (and other) Pilbara records indicate the presence of an established breeding population in the region.

A broad range of food plants for *H. b. nerina* was summarised by Braby (2004). These include *Synedrella nodiflora* Gaertn. (Asteraceae), *Alternanthera denticulata* R.Br. (Amaranthaceae) and *Sida rhombifolia* L. (Malvaceae). While conducting a botanical reléve of the herbland, it was noticed that there was a high concentration of *Alternanthera* sp. present but further observations are required to establish if this is a larval food plant for the species in the Pilbara.

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